

YOUTH SERVICES POLICY

Title: Predisposition Investigation and Social History Next Annual Review Date: 07/30/2013	Type: D. Community Based Services Sub Type: 11. Investigations and Reports Number: D.11.1
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References: La. Children's Code Arts. 888, 890 and 891; ACA Juvenile Probation and Aftercare Standards 2-7181, 2-7182, 2-7183, 2-7184, 2-7185, 2-7186, 2-7187, 2-7188, 2-7189, 2-7190, 2-7191; YS Policy D.10.32 "SAVRY - Community Based Services"	
STATUS: Approved	
Approved By: Mary L. Livers, Deputy Secretary	Date of Approval: 07/30/2012

I. AUTHORITY:

Deputy Secretary of Youth Services (YS) as contained in La. R.S. 36:405. Deviation from this policy must be approved by the Deputy Secretary.

II. PURPOSE:

To provide the court with information relevant to determining a disposition by establishing requirements for completing Predisposition Investigations (PDI) and the Social History by Community Based Services (CBS).

III. APPLICABILITY:

Deputy Secretary, Chief of Operations, Deputy Assistant Secretary/CBS, Probation and Parole Regional Managers/Juvenile, and employees of CBS.

IV. DEFINITIONS:

Case Staffing - A group process in which the purpose of the staffing is stated and information is presented regarding the youth's individual circumstance(s) to gain a consensus and recommendation for service options. The members present should include the Probation and Parole Officer/Juvenile (PPO/J), Probation and Parole Supervisor/Juvenile (PPS/J), Probation and Parole Regional Manager/Juvenile or designee and at least one unbiased staff member. For a non-secure placement staffing the parent and youth must also be invited to participate.

Community Based Services (CBS) - formerly known as the Division of Youth Services, including the regional probation and parole offices located throughout the state.

Continuous Quality Improvement Services (CQIS) - the performance-based and result-driven competency and efficiency management system, housed at Central Office.

Individual Service Plan (ISP) - an individualized plan developed by the assigned PPO/J to achieve the desired results for change. The plan is accomplished through the collaborative effort of the PPO/J, youth and parent/guardian. The plan contains specific, measurable goals to address the risks, needs and protective factors. The SAVRY, Probation Order, psychological evaluation, and other pertinent information are used to develop the plan. The ISP is modified throughout supervision as need areas are identified.

Juvenile Electronic Tracking System (JETS) - the centralized database utilized to track all youth in OJJ custody or under OJJ supervision.

Override - objective consideration that can be used to alter the youth's supervision level.

Predisposition Investigation (PDI) - a report prepared for the court by a PPO/J or intern that contains the circumstances surrounding commission of the offense, prior offenses committed by the child, impact on victim, etc., as outlined in Ch. C. Art. 890, and a recommendation for the care, treatment, rehabilitation, and placement of the youth.

Social History - the gathering of a youth's historical information by agency staff by asking specific questions, either of the youth, parent, others who know the youth or agencies who may have had contact with the youth. The information obtained is used to formulate a recommendation to the court and develop an individual service plan to meet the youth's needs. Information obtained includes: court information, demographics, living arrangements, educational history, substance use, peers, mental health, individual traits, history of abuse or neglect and leisure activities.

Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY) - the SAVRY is an evidence-based assessment designed to assist professionals in making judgments about a youth's needs for case planning. This assessment comprises 24 risk/need items identified in existing research on adolescent development and on delinquency and aggression in youth. Six protective factors are included in the SAVRY which have been identified by current research as potentially mitigating the risk of future violence and delinquent activity. The SAVRY utilizes a structured, professional judgment method of assessment, meaning that the individual completing the assessment rates the youth on a number of evidence-based risk factors and then weighs all the information to come to a final determination that the youth is Low, Moderate or High risk for future violence and/or general re-offending.

Supplemental Social - a report to update the information obtained after an initial social history is completed.

Training Records Entry Completed (TREC) - the database used to track training hours of all YS employees.

V. POLICY:

It is the Deputy Secretary's policy that OJJ shall provide PDIs to the court that give the court timely, relevant and accurate data so that it may select the most appropriate disposition. The PDI shall not be initiated prior to adjudication unless the youth, with advice of counsel, consents. The PDI shall be completed in accordance with Louisiana Children's Code Article 890 and presented to the court at the time specified or as determined by the general practice of the court. If the Court does not order a PDI prior to disposition OJJ shall ask the court to order one.

The contents of the PDI, Social History and Supplemental Social are confidential and shall only be released in accordance with Louisiana Children's Code 891.

VI. PROCEDURES FOR PDI:

- A. The contents of the PDI are specified in the Children's Code Article 890. The PDI shall include an outline of a potential service plan identifying the major problems to be addressed. Results from the SAVRY as well as other documents such as psychological evaluations, psychiatric evaluations, school records, information from prior services, etc., shall be considered when preparing a PDI for the court.
- B. When making recommendations to the court, the Probation & Parole Officer/Juvenile (PPO/J) shall consider the youth's overall level of risk for re-offending or for being violent and the items identified in the SAVRY as contributing to the youth's delinquency. The SAVRY is used as a guide to professional risk assessment and intervention planning for violence and delinquency risk management in youth. Ideally, the PDI shall report the Social History/contextual items and Individual/Clinical items where the youth scored High, and in some cases report items where the youth scored Moderate, if these items are relevant for determining a disposition. The court and/or youth's attorney shall only be given the youth's SAVRY score, and shall not be given a copy of the SAVRY form.
- C. The PDI should encouraged the court to consider probation prior to placing a youth in the Agency's custody.

- D. There shall be documentation in the case record that all appropriate available services have been utilized to prevent the removal of a youth from their home.
- E. According to the Louisiana Children's Code, commitment to the custody of the Office of Juvenile Justice may be appropriate if any of the following exists:

There is an undue risk that during the period of a suspending commitment or probation the youth will commit another crime.

The youth is in need of correctional treatment or custodial environment that can be provided most effectively by his commitment.

A lesser disposition will deprecate the seriousness of the youth's delinquent act.

The delinquent act involved the illegal carrying, use, or possession of a firearm.

- F. The following criteria will be considered when recommending placement outside of the home:
 - 1. Risk/needs identified by the SAVRY cannot be met in the community or have been offered and have been unsuccessful, or due to level of risk to the community or have been offered and have been unsuccessful, or due to level of risk to the community identified by the SAVRY, it would not be appropriate for the youth to remain in the community.
 - 2. The youth was supervised at the highest level available for a reasonable period of time, provided public safety and the youth's welfare are protected.
 - 3. Consideration of placement with grandparents, aunts, uncles, older siblings, or friends of the family was considered and determined to be inappropriate. Initiative must be taken to contact the non-custodial parent, as this may be a viable resource.
 - 4. If problems at school are the cause for removal, it was determined that other possible alternative schools or educational/vocational resources were not available/appropriate.

- G. If the recommendation is that a youth be placed out-of-the-home, the least restrictive setting should be recommended. A youth must receive a High rating on the SAVRY to be considered for a secure placement. If secure placement is the recommendation for a youth who rates less than High on the SAVRY, a packet which includes the override/staffing form, JETS Master Form, Signed Judgment/Custody Order, Psychological and or Psychosexual evaluation, and the SAVRY shall be sent to the Deputy Assistant Secretary or designee for review and approval.
- H. The PPS/J shall track the completion of the PDI and all reports to ensure timely completion. A case staffing shall be held before the PDI is approved by a PPS/J and submitted to the court. If the PDI cannot be completed by the deadline determined by the court, the court shall be notified immediately.

VII. PROCEDURES FOR SOCIAL HISTORY AND SAVRY:

- A. A Social History and SAVRY shall be completed on every youth committed to YS, OJJ, regardless of the length of custody. If the court renders a disposition without a PDI, the assigned PPO/J shall complete a Social History and SAVRY form within 14 days of receiving the case.
- B. A Social History and SAVRY shall be completed on every youth placed on probation for a period of more than 6 months.
- C. The Social History may be completed utilizing one of the approved OJJ formats (i.e., SAVRY Social History, Narrative Social History, Social History) located in JETS. The contents of the Social History shall be the same as the PDI without a recommendation for disposition. The Court shall be provided a copy of the Social History, unless it has indicated otherwise. Student interns, volunteers, case worker assistants and clerical staff may gather information to complete the PDI or Social History.

VIII. PROCEDURES FOR SUPPLEMENTAL SOCIAL:

- A. In subsequent adjudications, a Supplemental Social may replace a PDI, if approved by the court. A Supplemental Social shall also be completed on each revocation of probation. The Supplemental Social shall provide the court with details of the instant offense(s), any significant changes in the home, the youth's behavior since his last appearance in court and a recommendation for the disposition.

IV. Quality Assurance:

- A. Every quarter, the Regional Manager shall review one PDI from each supervisory unit in their office to ensure the following:
 - 1. The PDI was completed by the deadline established by the court.
 - 2. The facts were accurately presented in the report.
 - 3. The recommendation is in agreement with the SAVRY rating.
 - 4. The recommendation includes the appropriate service referrals as identified by the SAVRY.
 - 5. The grammar, spelling and punctuation are correct.

VIII. Quality Assurance - Central Office:

A review of randomly chosen PDIs shall also be part of the Continuous Quality Improvement Services (CQIS) annual quality assurance review.

Previous Regulation/Policy Number: D. 11.1

Previous Effective Date: 6/1/11

Attachments/References: